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merit in composition, drawing, and colour, and is executed with much freedom. A well-marked gradation of improvement may be observed in the early vases, the Naples marbles, and the later pictures in the same collection.

Sculpture made the same gradual progress, from the human-headed bulls and hawk-headed kings of Assyria, and the massive sphinxes and gigantic sitting figures of Egypt, to the Belvedere Apollo, the Farnese Hercules, and the Medicean Venus, those models of ideal beauty which are regarded as showing at once the perfection of the art and of the human form. Some of the earliest specimens of Greek sculpture are now in the British Museum; these are bas-reliefs from a monument at Xanthus, which probably belongs to the sixth century before Christ, not far from the period of the destruction of Nineveh. Here the eye is seen in full, though the figures are in profile, and all the countenances have the same character; but an advance on the Assyrian sculptures is seen in the folds of the draperies and the arrangement of the hair. An interesting example of early Athenian art, belonging to the time of Pisistratus, is a bas-relief representing a female figure mounting a chariot, discovered at Athens, and a cast of which will be found in the Crystal Palace. The metopes recently found at Selinus, in Sicily, and now in the museum at Palermo, are in very high relief, coated over with plaster, and coloured so as to soften the appearance of the surface. The faces are represented in full, while the limbs are shown sideways; a very close resemblance may be traced between these figures and the large ones between the bulls on the outer wall of the palace of Sardanapalus. As Selinus was destroyed by the Carthaginians 409 B.C., these bas-reliefs must have been executed some time, probably a very considerable time, previous to that period.

Much controversy has lately taken place on the question, whether the ancients coloured their statues, as is contended by Mr. Owen Jones. That the practice was general, would perhaps be difficult to prove. That the Assyrians coloured their bas-reliefs is not disputed since traces of the pigment were discovered by Mr. Layard. That the statues of the Greeks were often painted, in imitation of nature, may be gathered from passages in Pausanias, Plutarch, and Plato; and that the practice extended to the whole of the statue is evident from the last-named writer, who says, that it is not by applying a rich or beautiful colour to any particular part, but by giving its local colour to each part, that the whole is made beautiful. That

the practice was not general, however, appears from Lucian, who, in the dialogue between Lycinus and Polystratus, informs us that the Venus of Cnidus by Praxiteles, and other celebrated statues, were not coloured.

Mr. Wornum, after mature consideration of this interesting question, has arrived at the conclusion, that "the practice of colouring statues is undoubtedly as ancient as the art of Statuary itself; although they were perhaps originally coloured more from a love of colour than from any design of improving the resemblance of the representation." * This agrees with what we have said upon the love of colour which is displayed in all first attempts. We learn from Pliny that the statue of Jupiter, placed in the Capitol by Tarquinius Priscus, was coloured with minium. What was first done from a love of colour was afterwards followed with a view to effect. "The naked form," says the writer just quoted, "was most probably merely varnished, the colouring being applied only to the eyes, eyebrows, lips, and hair, to the draperies, and the various ornaments of dress; and there can be little doubt that fine statues, especially of females, when carefully and tastefully coloured in this way, must have been extremely beautiful; the encaustic varnish upon the white marble must have had very much the effect of a pale, transparent flesh. Gold was also abundantly employed upon ancient statues; the hair of the Venus de' Medicis was gilded, and, in some, glass eyes and eyelashes of copper were inserted, examples of which are still extant." In statues of bronze, the eyes were often of silver; and in the "Boy extracting a Thorn from his Foot," the original of which is at Rome, the sockets are vacant, in which condition they were found when the statue was discovered.

The earliest productions of the sculptor were undoubtedly the figures of the gods worshipped by the pagan nations of antiquity, and the material first used was clay, the plastic nature of which would readily suggest its employment for the purpose. Clay figures, the work of early Italian artists, are still extant; and clay tablets and seals have been found in the mounds of Khorsabad and Kouyunjik. At a later period wood came into use, and marble was not used until the art had made considerable progress. Metal was used for ornamental purposes and for covering statues long before the process of casting was known, the work being executed by means of the hammer.

* Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, art. Pictura, page 905.

FRESCO PAINTING IN FLORENCE.

THE convent of St. Onofre, at Florence, was originally designed as a refuge for poor women. But since its foundation it was enriched by so many donations, that instead of being a simple plain home for the homeless, it became both rich and influential. At the end of the last century it was sold, and the sisterhood dissolved. A silk manufactory was then established on the premises, and busy hands soon gave a new aspect to the place. A few years passed and then one Tommaso Masi, a coachmaker, took a lease of the building. He set about repairing it at once, and in cleaning the walls of that part which had once been the refectory of the convent, discovered the dim outlines of a fresco painting. Happily his curiosity was excited, and with the utmost caution he proceeded to remove the coating of dust and dirt which had settled down upon it. Tommaso Masi succeeded to perfection, and the design of some great master shone forth once more in its accustomed place. The next step was to call in a well-qualified jury of artists to determine as to the worth and character of the picture; and Luigi, Sabutelli, Guiseppe, Bezzuoli, Alessandro Saracini, President of the Society of Artists at Sienna, and Professor Dupre, made a careful examination of the composition. This was in 1843. They found it very difficult to estimate the real value of the picture in the state it was then in, and hesitated to express an opinion further than as to the very remarkable character of the work. Patient and diligent exertion was used to restore the painting, and one after another the connoisseurs came to the conviction that it must have owed its origin to Perigino; to him therefore was the meed of praise awarded.

But the artists were wrong, and it was not the first time, perhaps,

that critics had blundered. Other artists of celebrity and numerous amateurs examined the picture; and in 1845 two young artists, Zotti and Della Porta, having examined the work with particular care, avowed their opinion to be that the production was that of the great Raffaello.

The painting represents the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his Disciples, a subject which is universally selected as appropriate to the refectories of convents. We give a rough sketch of the figures at the table, to convey an idea of the general disposition of the piece. But this is not the whole of the work. A species of canopy surmounts the group, and is enriched with beautiful foliage. The architecture is composed of slight pilasters and graceful arabesque ornaments. Between two of the pilasters, behind the figure of the Saviour a landscape is seen representing the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane. An angel is seen presenting the cup to Jesus, and at a little distance are the disciples asleep. A border of foliage and medallions surrounds the design.

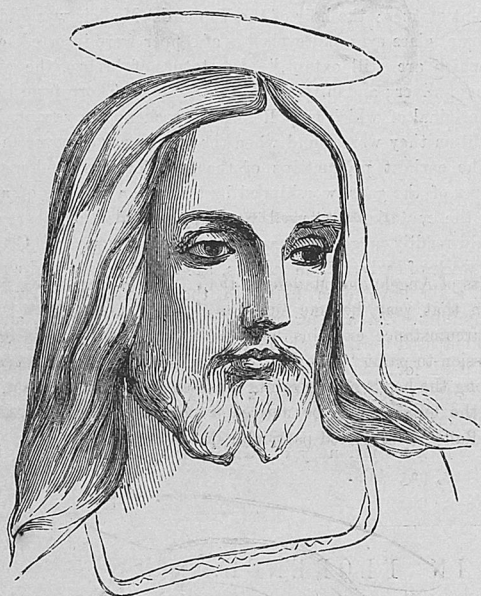
The attitudes of the principal figures in the chief group demand particular attention, and the character that is thrown into each physiognomy has induced us to present sketches of some of the heads. The Saviour is seated at the centre of the table; his left hand rests upon St. John, the beloved disciple, who is half-reclining on the board, and appears asleep; his other hand is raised as in warning; the expression of the face is thoughtful, mild yet commanding; it is the moment when he utters the words—"One of you shall betray me!" In uttering these words, his glance wanders around the table, and then rests upon the figure of the apostle

immediately opposite to St. John. That apostle is Judas Iscariot. The figure of this man is boldly relieved, and separated from the rest of the group; one of his hands rests on the table, and with the

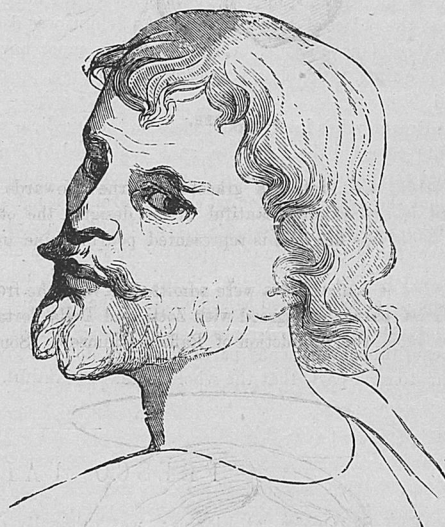
of the intensest malignity, baseness, and disquietude, exhibited in the features of this betrayer. The contrast of these two principal figures is peculiarly striking; and the faces brought thus



THE LAST SUPPER.



OUR SAVIOUR.



JUDAS.



ST. JOHN.

other he holds the bag of money—the means of his temptation. His head is averted from the penetrating glance of the Master, and is turned fully towards the spectators. There is an expression

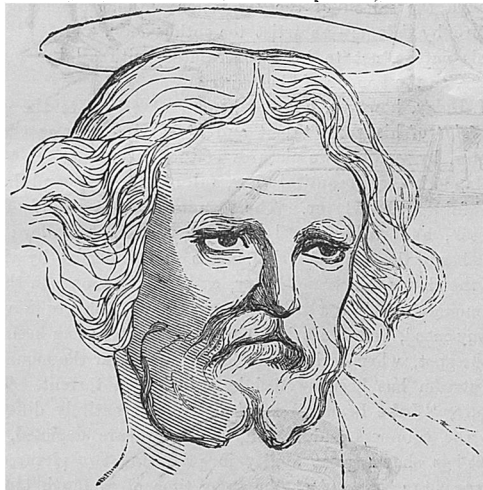
closely together—one so full of highest virtue, the other so vicious and depraved—demand particular attention. The figures of the other apostles are all boldly designed, and are thoroughly charac-

teristic of the men. St. Peter sits to the right of the Saviour; St. Andrew, St. James the Greater, and St. Bartholomew, have their glances fixed upon Judas. St. Peter holds a knife in his hand, and the strongest indignation is written on his countenance; the expression of St. Andrew is severe, of St. James melancholy, St. Bartholomew resentful yet full of pity. The rest of the apostles are, for the most part, calm and indifferent; two, however, should be carefully regarded. The first, St. James the Less, sits at the extreme

engraved by Perpetti; upon the border of the gown of the Madonna, in the picture painted for Lorenzo Nasi; upon the robes of "The Holy Family," in the Palace Rinucci; and also upon various frescoes. In the last year of his life, Raffaello signed his name in full.

The figure of St. James the Less is said to be a portrait of Raffaello, and the same as that in the celebrated picture called "The Contest at the Holy Sacrament."

In 1505 Raffaello was at Florence. At that time he painted



ST. PETER.



ST. BARTHOLOMEW OR ST. JAMES.

left of the table; his profile is gracefully turned towards the spectator, and is remarkably beautiful in its design; the other, St. Thomas, is not less fine; he is represented pouring wine into a cup or glass.

A vast number of connoisseurs were admitted to view the fresco, and, for the most part, they agreed with Zotti and Della Porta, as to the picture being the production of Raffaello himself. Some of

portraits of Angelo and Madeleine Doni. A member of this family, early in that year, became superior of the Convent of St. Onofre. This circumstance explains how the young painter obtained the commission to paint "The Last Supper" on the convent walls.

Among the heads of the saints represented on the medals which adorn the foliage is to be noticed a portrait of St. Bernard, for whom Raffaello professed particular devotion.



ST. THOMAS.



ST. JAMES THE LESS.

the reasons which led them to this conclusion may not be uninteresting.

On the collar of the tunic of St. Thomas are the following letters in gold:—R A, P and L united, U, R and S, O a little effaced, A M M D V. This is translated: "Raphael Urbinas, Anno Domini 1505."

Raffaello was, it is well known, in the habit of thus signing many of his pictures. It is thus written on the robe of the Virgin,

The names of the disciples, placed by the painter under the figures of the apostles, are written in the dialect of Urbino, where Raffaello was born.

The foliage and other ornaments which surround the picture resemble those to be met with in other works of the same master; and the delicate painting of Olivet and Gethsemane, together with the figures which are introduced, remind the spectator of those

beautiful compositions of Raffaele which adorn the walls of the Vatican.

A painter, M. Giulio Piatti, and the sculptor Emilio Santarelli, possessed for a long time designs which were always attributed to Raffaele, and which represented several of the figures—St. Peter with a knife in his hand, St. James the Less, and St. Andrew—the same in every particular as they appear in the fresco.

Upon these proofs, it has been generally concluded that "The Last Supper" of St. Onofre is the undoubted work of Raffaele. But, as we have presented our readers with the evidence in favour of its authenticity, it is but fair to represent the other side of the question.

An Italian writer, named Gargani, believed that he had discovered the author of the painting to be none other than Neri di Bici, on account of a manuscript, bearing date 1461, declaring that a picture of "The Last Supper" was painted on the walls of the refectory of St. Onofre by that artist. On further examination, however, it appears that there were two refectories, the old and the new, and that the one in which the fresco was discovered is certainly more modern than the other. Besides this, there is evidence of the other painting having been destroyed. But, if no other evidence existed but the painting itself, the grouping of the design, the style of the whole, the delicacy of finish, would be enough to prove that it was not painted at the period of Neri di Bici—there being a vast difference between pictures of 1461 and 1505. In the interval between those two epochs, painting made immense progress, and a complete revolution in art took place; and a more positive contrast can scarcely be imagined than exists between the productions of those two ages.

A celebrated German artist, having seen and greatly admired the picture, wrote to MM. Della Porta and Zotti, assuring them that he had no doubt of the authenticity of the painting; that the construction of the piece, the expression of the various faces, all pointed out Raffaele as their author. The objection urged on the ground of its not being mentioned in any of the catalogues of Raffaele's works was easily met by the fact, that many well-attested works of that master were omitted in these lists; that at the period when Raffaele must have executed this work, he was a young and comparatively unknown man; and that the silence of his biographers on this particular work was not to be taken into account.

A great deal of controversy was originated by the discovery of the picture; but at length the critics came to an almost unanimous conclusion that the painting was the work of the great Raffaele. However plain and simple the sketches may be, this fact is, we think, enough to warrant us in presenting our readers with the designs.

The picture was with great difficulty removed from the convent wall. It was sold to the Tuscan government for £13,000.

FINE ART EXHIBITION AT GENEVA.

The biennial exhibition of works of art at Geneva was established, some years ago, by a society of artists and amateurs, whose efforts to promote the study of the fine arts, and to encourage and reward those devoted to them, have caused the subject to be taken into the serious consideration of the government. Placed, as it is, amid the romantic scenery which has given birth to one of the most celebrated schools of landscape-painting, represented by such able artists as MM. Diday and Calame, Geneva, so famous for the intelligence and commercial activity of its citizens, promises to become one of the centres of art. In the sublime scenery of their fatherland, and no less in the heroic achievements of their forefathers, the artists of Switzerland have a fertile and, indeed, inexhaustible field for the exercise of their talents. Among the most promising artists of the Genevese school, we may enumerate M. Gleyre, the painter of that poetical composition, "The Night of Life," which has been so much admired in the Luxembourg Gallery; M. Lugardon, the interpreter of Swiss history; and Leopold Robert, one of the meditative school of landscape-painters, which had its best exponent in Ruysdael. But what has been wanting to Swiss art has been appreciation and encouragement, for

want of which the beautiful and the picturesque have to be pursued amid difficulties, and fame alone has rewarded the success that has been attained by self-denial. The times are past when such munificence was displayed as that of the senate of Basil, which offered Holbein an annual pension of 1,200 florins to induce him to fix his residence in his native town. Yet, with all these discouraging circumstances, we feel assured that, one day or another, the landscape school of Geneva will acquire renown; and, with this feeling, it was not without disappointment and regret that we walked through the saloon of the exhibition without observing a single picture by Calame—an artist too enthusiastic, and too truly Swiss in his nature, not to have contributed, with all the force of his genius, to the honour of his country.

M. Diday, however, has the honour of giving to the exhibition the *éclat* of his great talent and high reputation as a landscape-painter, by sending two pictures of the highest merit. "The Aar at Handeck" is a beautiful view, full of grandeur, and drawn with truthfulness and vigour. The foaming torrent bounds from rock to rock, and rushes angrily through the sombre valley; the dark branches of the tall pines are shaken and distorted by the wind; and the clouds, black and heavy, cast their shadows on the sides of the mountain. It is a grand picture, showing nature in a wild and stormy mood, and bears internal evidence of having been sketched on the spot, when dark clouds have rolled over the mountain, and the stream has been swelled by rain into a torrent. The other picture, "Lake Lemán," is of a character entirely different. In this the calmness and serenity of nature are depicted, and the artist has shown great ability in producing two pictures of such diverse character, and at the same time of so much truthfulness and beauty. It is a rich composition, drawn with equal freedom and vigour, and evincing a profound study of nature, and knowledge of her varied forms. The brushwood and wild plants growing on the borders of the lake are drawn with wonderful fidelity to nature. The colouring is clear, but somewhat deficient in warmth; otherwise it is a masterly composition.

Near these two pictures we perceive several landscapes by M. Saltzman, a young artist of Alsace, who has acquired in Italy, where he resided some time, a manner of composition and execution full of boldness and vigour. "A Souvenir of Provence," the best of the three pictures which he exhibits, is marked by those qualities in a high degree, and the clearness and harmony of the colouring deserve the praise which is freely bestowed. The composition is simple: a heath, a rocky bank, and some fine trees, form the landscape, which is animated by some figures evincing a taste for the antique, and drawn with the freedom and vigour which are characteristic of the whole design. The other two productions of this artist are of inferior merit, and have a reddishness of tone which gives them an unpleasant effect.

M. Humbert contributes to the exhibition a series of landscapes, with figures of animals, which do credit to himself and to the school to which he belongs. Lightness and beauty, truthfulness to nature, and splendour of colouring, are their characteristics. His skies are bright and clear, recalling those of Claude; his distances correct; and his animals richly coloured, and grouped in a picturesque and effective manner. His best picture represents "A Mountain Pasture," with a goat and several cows; it is of large dimensions, and characterised by all the qualities we have ascribed to him. The light clouds which sweep slowly across the sky, the cool misty air of early morning, and the glistening dew upon the herbage, are finely represented. The picture derives a grand effect from the transparency of the shadows; and nothing can be better than the grouping and colours of the cattle, by which the effect of contrast is obtained, without injury to the harmony of the composition. "A Landscape," with animals, is somewhat similar in design, and resembles it in the transparency of the veil of mist and the truthfulness to nature of the animals.

M. Thuiller, a distinguished landscape-painter, contributes a grand view of the "Lake of Aunney." This picture has a pleasing effect at first sight, but on a more attentive view, the spectator is struck by a peculiarity in the treatment of the sky. It is possible that the scene represented, may, in certain conditions of the atmosphere, present a similar aspect, but its representation evinces a want of taste on the part of the artist. The effect produced is